



## **INTRODUCTORY REMARKS TO BASIC-VERTIC WORKSHOP ON NEXT STEPS FOR NUCLEAR NEGOTIATIONS AFTER NEW START**

Andreas Persbo, Executive Director, 31 March 2011

Dear friends and colleagues. It is a great pleasure to welcome you to this event, as a sponsor. And, of course, a very special thank you to Senator Kerry's office, for giving us the room, and the staff of the British-American Security Information Council, for organizing the event.

VERTIC, as you may know, rarely funds activities and meetings. But whenever we have the opportunity we do. Last year, we contributed with funds to a International Pugwash Meeting in Islamabad, to discuss confidence building measures in South Asia.

This year, we are contributing funds to this informal meeting on Capitol Hill. We are also funding Wilton Park for a larger conference on verification in all its aspects in June. Preparations for that meeting are on-going—speaker invitations are scheduled to go out this week. In fact, I hear that they arrived today. Invitations will go out sometime soon.

In the last few years, VERTIC's activities have broadened considerably. We are no longer exclusively devoted to writing about verification and implementation. Our largest programme deals with direct technical assistance, and that programme is expanding. We are active assistance providers for the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions. Lately, we are carefully expanding into the illicit trafficking of nuclear and radiological materials. We may also—if everything goes according to plan—launch a programme on assistance support for the IAEA's Additional Protocol for the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement later this year.

Increasingly, we are being called on by governments to directly contribute with thinking on verification concepts and planning. In some instances, we are auditing already existing regimes. This is a challenging task for a relatively small organization. So, we're looking to grow our team.

My job, as Executive Director, is to think strategically about where our efforts are best placed. As such, this meeting will be a welcome opportunity to hear where US-Russian arms control may be going next. It will also allow us to have a discussion on the prospects for multilateral involvement. Prioritization is also important, of course. Our community has a dauntingly long list of tasks ahead of us. We are expected to complete these, often collaborative, tasks in an environment of shrinking resources, tighter space. I will be listening very closely to our panellists, and to you, to try to get a better understanding of where we all should be. Where we should work, and where we should defer.

Anyway, I have already taken up too much of your time. So I'll hand over to Mr. Paul Ingram. My good friend, my first boss of sorts, and Executive Director of the British American Security Information Council.

Thank you for your attention.